

in some cases (e.g. Putman, 2000; Halliwell, 1997). There is also evidence that bird predation by pine martens is seasonal having a higher occurrence in the diet during winter months (e.g. Putman, 2000; Gurnell *et al.*, 1994). However, bird predation does occur at other times of the year with at least one study showing an increase in bird predation during spring and summer (Balharry, 1993). My observations indicate that pine martens are potentially a voracious predator of breeding passerines. However, as the predation event documented here was related to man-made nest structures only, this level of predation rate may not be similar for naturally nesting birds.

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House sparrow counts at an Uddingston garden

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In the year 2000 the late Professor Norman Grist asked us to count sparrows as he had noticed the numbers were falling in his garden in the west end of Glasgow. Sparrows were counted on the first of each month in the back garden. They perched on the hedge and particularly liked to eat the *Forsythia* flower buds in the spring and the seeds of *Clematis tangutica* in the autumn. Bird feeders were put out from September to May. An obvious dip can be seen in numbers between May and September when feeders were removed (Table 1). Summer numbers may have been augmented by young fledglings. Overall, there was a marked decline in counts of sparrows throughout the 10 year period (Fig.1). During this period it should be noted that the sparrows were disturbed by building work next door in March 2006, the hedge next door dug up in September 2006, and the fence painted in June 2007. In April 2009 the large *Leylandia* hedge was cut down and from October to February the school beside our garden was demolished. January and February 2010 were the coldest for approximately 50 years (Meteorological Office, 2010). These disturbances may explain the drop in numbers from September 2009, "Within urban areas, House Sparrows may have disappeared from more affluent areas, where changes are more likely to have occurred to habitat structure (Bailey *et al.*, 2010). It may also be explained by the sparrows moving to other gardens with a general upsurge and proliferation of bird feeders in local gardens. It is hoped that the numbers will return to normal once construction of new houses on the site is completed.

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	200-1	2001-2	2002-3	2003-4	2004-5	2005-6	2006-7	2007-8	2008-9	2009-10	Average
Mar	21	21	31	31	29	22	13	25	15	15	22.3
Apr	11	14	31	31	25	21	21	15	17	10	19.6
May	8	8	25	10	21	17	22	8	7	6	13.2
June	14	14	10	13	11	11	24	5	8	3	11.3
July	12	15	14	15	14	12	12	6	10	5	11.5
Aug	10	22	22	16	10	11	5	9	5	8	11.8
Sep	15	31	31	18	21	6	4	5	5	4	14.0
Oct	25	32	31	20	22	20	13	11	12	2	18.8
Nov	27	33	30	23	21	25	20	14	15	1	20.9
Dec	12	32	34	25	25	25	21	21	24	8	22.7
Jan	16	19	33	31	20	26	25	21	15	7	21.3
Feb	21	25	23	28	21	27	20	19	15	6	20.5
Average	16.0	22.2	26.3	21.8	20.0	18.6	16.7	13.3	12.3	6.3	17.3

Table 1. Counts of house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) at an Uddingston garden from 2000-10.

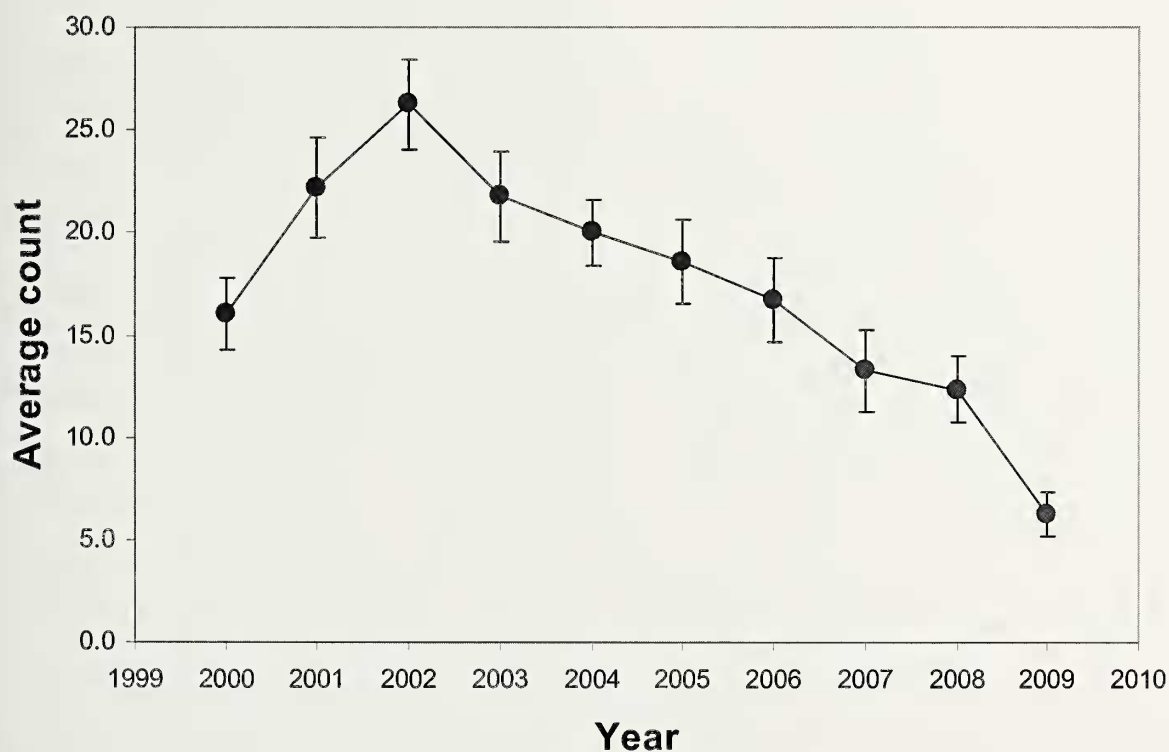


Fig 1. The average count (\pm standard error) of house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) at an Uddingston garden from 2000-10.